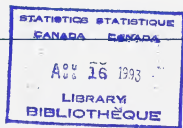


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1991 Census Content Development Final Report



1991 CENSUS CONTENT DEVELOPMENT:

FINAL REPORT

Content & Planning
1991 Census
August 1990

1991 CENSUS CONTENT DEVELOPMENT: FINAL REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The next Census of Canada will be conducted on June 4, 1991.

The 1991 Census will be the last decennial census before the turn of the century, and the data it collects will be used as planning tools for projects well past the year 2000. To ensure the usefulness and relevance of the data, Statistics Canada management felt that the information content and format of the 1991 Census questionnaire should be reviewed and, if necessary, adapted to reflect changed social and economic conditions.

As part of the preparation for this census Statistics Canada initiated a wide-ranging research and testing program, along with the most extensive consultations in its history. Consultation meetings were held in major cities with groups representing every sector of Canadian society. Participants were asked to submit recommendations and briefs on the content of the next census.

The research and testing program included two versions of the comprehensive National Census Test, as well as two preliminary small-scale tests of possible census content. Qualitative research and cognitive studies were commissioned to investigate respondent understanding of concepts, questions and instructions on the census questionnaire. On the basis of the results of these initiatives, recommendations on 1991 Census content and questions were developed and forwarded to Cabinet for consideration. On July 21, 1990, the questions approved by Cabinet were published in the Canada Gazette.

This report documents the development of the final content of the 1991 Census of Canada. It outlines the process by which questions and content were developed, and recommendations adopted and submitted to Cabinet. It also explains the various factors that influenced Statistics Canada decisions.

2.0 BACKGROUND: THE CENSUS CONTENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The planning, development and coordination of a census is a complex and elaborate operation. It requires studies to assess data quality and coverage of the previous census; consultations with users to determine their information needs; the testing of new and revised census content; and the development of priorities on the basis of test results, legislative needs, and numerous other constraints.

For Statistics Canada, which is required by the Statistics Act to conduct a census every five years, planning for the next census must begin even before the previous one is completed. As a result, work on the development of content of the 1991 Census began while the 1986 Census was still in the field.

3.0 EVALUATION OF THE 1986 CENSUS

After every census, Statistics Canada evaluates the extent of undercoverage and assesses the data quality of individual questions and variables. The final assessment of the quality of a census is taken into consideration in developing the next census.

In the case of the 1986 Census, two findings in particular have influenced future census planning and development. Underenumeration was found to be significantly higher in the 1986 Census than in previous censuses. In 1981 it was 2.0%; in 1986 it averaged 3.21%, and in some areas of the country it was much higher. As a result, the development of the 1991 Census has included plans for new questions to improve coverage.

The other important finding that came out of the 1986 evaluation was the unreliability of the data produced by Question 7, the new (in 1986) question on aboriginal status. A small but significant response error distorted the data to the extent that they can not be officially released. On the basis of this experience Statistics Canada concluded that such a question would require considerable revision for use in future censuses.

4.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS

Throughout 1987 extensive consultations were conducted on the content of the 1991 Census. Whereas in the past, census consultations were generally confined to major users in government and the private sector, for this census the scope of consultations was extended to encompass every sector of Canadian society including the general public. The range of groups involved included business people and associations, labour organizations, librarians, academics, community and social service workers, religious and ethno-cultural groups and private citizens, as well as all levels of government.

In total, 88 meetings were held in almost every major city in the country. Over 1,100 people participated in the process, and more than 150 written briefs were submitted. The comments received dealt with every aspect of the census.

The consultation process produced many recommendations for future census and sample survey content. The 1991 Census Content Consultation Report (April 1988) documented the consultations process and analyzed participants' comments by census topic and by contributing organization. Where a clear consensus was evident, the views of participants were summarized as recommendations for 1991 Census content. (The consultation recommendations are included in Appendix A of this report.)

5.0 RESEARCH AND TESTING PROGRAM

5.1 Modular Test One and Two

Besides the consultation process, the development of the 1991 Census entailed a research and testing program that comprised methodological studies and plans for testing questionnaires and content options, including new questions and topics.

Potential new content for testing had been identified from the 1986 Census results (including the need for new coverage questions), the extensive consultation process, and by subject-matter specialists based on their knowledge of user needs.

The content testing program began in late 1987 and early 1988 with two small tests of specific content components or "modules". The tests were held in selected major cities, using non-probability samples of approximately 3,000 households. Their objectives were to obtain an initial reading of the quality and acceptability of new questions: to identify those that did not perform well and others that should be revised for further testing in the comprehensive National Census Test, scheduled for the fall of 1988.

Modular Test One (MT-1) focused on approaches to improve coverage, as well as on questions designed to enhance demographic, labour force and income data. To help determine the quality of the responses, as well as respondent comprehension of the new questions, a follow-up study was conducted. People were asked about their reactions to the questions and questionnaire.

As approaches to improve coverage, MT-1 tested a household roster, used successfully in the American Census, and a new agricultural operator question. It also tested demographic questions on common-law status, nuptiality and fertility; labour force questions on hours of unpaid activities and length of work experience. The new income questions included income received from government transfer payments, income tax

payable, and hourly wage rates.

Modular Test Two (MT-2) addressed language, ethno-cultural and mobility status questions. As suggested by the consultations, it included two new ethnocultural questions, one on ancestry and the other on ethnic identity, as well as a new question on race designed to meet the information needs of the Employment Equity Act. It also tested the concept of "main" language" as a possible replacement for "home language". The MT-2 new mobility questions were developed to obtain data on migration in intercensal years.

Unlike MT-1, no full-scale re-interview survey was conducted. However, as follow-up to the MT-2 survey, respondents and other people were recruited to participate in group discussions to talk about the questions. These focus groups were arranged in most major cities in the country. The participants included leaders and members of the Black community in Halifax, native groups in Winnipeg and Vancouver, ethno-cultural groups in various centres, Francophones in Toronto, as well as members of the general public.

Another special feature of MT-2 was the use of a split sample methodology. The test involved two questionnaires: one with a "Canadian" mark box in the ancestry and ethnic identity questions, and the other without this pre-printed response category.

The results of the modular tests were analyzed for data quality, response rates, respondent comprehension of the questions, and the sensitivity of questions and topics. Among the conclusions reached were some that affected the consultation recommendations. These included:

- * no difficulties were encountered in asking the fertility of unmarried women;
- * the inclusion of a "Canadian" mark box affected responses, especially multiple responses to the question on identity;
- * some respondents found the race question offensive; and
- * it would require more than one or two questions to gather good information on time spent on volunteer work and in-home child care.

It was evident from the tests that good quality data on housework, volunteer work and unpaid child care could not be obtained from the census. Only a special survey of some length and complexity could address these topics and meet the wide-spread demand for statistical information on them.

The results of MT-1 and MT-2 contributed to the development of the National Census Test (NCT). Most of the questions

which had proved unsatisfactory in the modular tests were eliminated from further consideration as possible content for the NCT and the 1991 Census. These included main language, income tax payable, and time spent doing housework, volunteer work and unpaid child care.

Other questions, such as mobility status and race, were revised. The race question was simplified and shortened, and the standard five-year mobility question clarified and revised to reduce respondent burden.

5.2 Qualitative Research

For the first time in the history of the Canadian census extensive qualitative research was used to assist in the development of the content of census questions and questionnaires. Two kinds of research projects were initiated: focus groups were used to assist in both question development and evaluation, and cognitive studies aided in the development of more "respondent-friendly" questionnaires.

5.2.1 Focus Groups

MT-2 marked the first time that focus groups were used in census content development in Canada. Before the questionnaire was designed, focus groups were held in Montreal and Toronto to assist in the conceptual development and wording of the ethno-cultural questions. Among other things they showed that the term "visible minority" (as used in employment equity legislation) was not uniformly and clearly understood by the Canadian public.

Focus groups were also used in the evaluation for the results of MT-2. As stated above, focus groups were held in several major centres to discuss the MT-2 ethno-cultural, language and mobility questions. The comments received were instrumental in the development of more clearly understood questions for the NCT and the 1991 Census.

5.2.2 Price Waterhouse Studies

The management consulting firm, Price Waterhouse, was contracted by Statistics Canada to conduct qualitative research relating to both the short- and long-form census questionnaires. Rather than content, the research concentrated on issues related to instructions, format and the sequencing of questions. Its purpose was to develop

recommendations for "respondent-friendly" questionnaires for 1991.

Using primarily qualitative and cognitive research techniques, the Price Waterhouse consultants studied the questionnaires from the point of view of respondent understanding, ease of completion, and the impact of these respondent issues on data quality. The research resulted in recommendations for clarifying and simplifying the questionnaire, which were incorporated into the NCT and 1991 Census forms. Among them were:

- * use of larger type face;
- * clearer and shorter instructions;
- * labelling questions and topics (e.g., "work" for the questions related to labour force participation);
- * use of "step" methodology to guide respondents through the questionnaire;
- * clarifying skip and logic patterns.

The Price Waterhouse recommendations supported several of the observations in the Consultation Report, especially those that had stressed the impact an ageing population will have on census questions and data collection.

6.0 INTEGRATION OF THE CONSULTATION RECOMMENDATIONS INTO THE NATIONAL CENSUS TEST

While the results of the consultations had contributed informally to the development of the modular tests, they were given formal consideration in planning the National Census Test (NCT). Other determinants of the NCT included the results of the modular tests, user needs, the Price Waterhouse recommendations, and other suggestions to simplify the questionnaire.

Many of the consultation recommendations for census content were included in the NCT. Among them were:

- * the separation of legal and de facto marital status into two questions--legal marital status and common-law;
- * information on fertility asked of all women over 15 years of age, regardless of marital status;
- * additional information on condominiums obtained through a new question on condominium fees, asked of home-owners only;
- * accommodation for more than one person responsible for household payments;
- * a new question on race or colour;
- * the 1986 question on ethnic origin split into two

components, ancestry and self-identification; the mark box "Black" removed from both questions and "Canadian" added;

- * the issue of aboriginal status addressed as part of the questions on ethnic origin and identity;
- * the wording of the mother tongue question changed to read "language first spoken at home in childhood";
- * the addition of a new question on language ability, with no question on knowledge of official languages; and
- * a new question on wage rates.

In the housing topic, some questions that were not widely supported during the consultations, such as dwelling condition and value of owner-occupied dwelling, were retained in the NCT due to the efforts of industry spokespersons and provincial and federal housing agencies.

While a number of the consultation recommendations were incorporated into the NCT, others, such as adding cooperatives to the question on tenure, aboriginal legal status, and the disability question were not considered appropriate to a test environment or did not require testing. These questions were referred to the 1991 or subsequent censuses.

7.0 THE NATIONAL CENSUS TEST

Conducted on November 4, 1988, the National Census Test (NCT) was a comprehensive test of possible 1991 Census content. The test was sent to a probability sample of 34,000 households selected from all regions of the country except Indian reserves and the Yukon and Northwest Territories. (At the same time separate tests of canvasser-administered questionnaires were conducted on Indian reserves and a northern community.) The NCT used the same methodology as the census--drop-off and mail-back of questionnaires.

Following the NCT, a re-interview study probed respondents' understanding of, and reactions to, the test.

The NCT consisted of 10 steps and 55 questions. In spite of its length, reaction to the NCT was generally positive. After follow-up, the overall response rate to the test was 90%. Response rates to individual questions were generally very high.

Among the new and revised topics tested in the NCT were the following:

- * relationship to Person 1

- * household maintainer(s)
- * household roster
- * agricultural operator
- * legal and common-law marital status
- * reason first marriage ended
- * mother tongue
- * language ability
- * race or colour
- * ethnic origin or parents/grandparents
- * ethnic or cultural identity
- * place of birth of parents
- * place of residence one year ago
- * length of work experience
- * date started with employer
- * current employment status
- * current pay rate
- * number of bedrooms
- * dwelling condition
- * monthly condominium fees.

The relationship question was revised and simplified, and the number of pre-printed response categories reduced.

The response category, "Canadian", was included in both the ethnic origin and identity questions, at the bottom of the list. To enhance the logical sequence, mother tongue, a traditional 2A (short form) question, was grouped with the other language questions. In addition, a new question on current employment status was tested as a possible replacement for the traditional five-part labour force participation question.

Analysis of the results of the NCT indicated that most of these questions worked well. The new placement of the mother tongue question yielded more consistent and logical data. Furthermore, the test results indicated that respondents understood the difference between ethnic origin and identity.

However, respondents did have difficulty with a few NCT questions, for example, length of work experience and date started with employer. In addition, data quality problems were encountered with the coverage question on usual place of residence of temporary residents.

In the case of current employment status, analysis showed that it was not an adequate substitute for the five-part question because it did not provide a sufficiently accurate estimate of the employed population. As a result of the evaluation of the NCT these questions were dropped from further consideration.

There was little adverse reaction to the question on race or

colour. Very few negative comments were received, and the level of response was comparable to other questions in the test. However, from the results and follow-up it was evident that the question, as posed, was confusing for native respondents; they were unclear about how to answer. In general, the data collected by the test question did not differ significantly from those derived from the 1986 Census question on ethnic origin.

As stated above, both the NCT results and the re-interview survey indicated that respondents understood the difference between ethnic origin and identity. However, the inclusion of the "Canadian" mark box had a considerable effect on the data. A substantial proportion of respondents reported "Canadian" as either single or multiple origins; an even greater number answered "Canadian" as single or multiple responses to the question on identity.

As in MT-2, information about the native population was collected as part of the ethnic origin and identity questions. Respondents were asked if they were North American Indian, Métis or Inuit (Eskimo) and, where applicable, to indicate their Band, First Nation or Tribe. There was no question on legal status under the Indian Act.

8.0 SECOND ROUND OF CONSULTATIONS AND NCT-2

Following the National Census Test, Statistics Canada decided to consult further with users, respondents and other interested parties. The purpose of the consultations was to learn their priority data needs based on the NCT results, and to reduce the number of topics and questions under consideration for the 1991 Census.

Close to 200 local, regional and national ethnic groups were contacted and asked to specify their data needs. In particular, they were asked to indicate their group or community's preferred ethno-cultural questions, and to choose between the ethnic origin and identity questions. They were also asked to comment on the race question and the presence of the "Canadian" mark box.

Besides multicultural groups, the second round of consultations involved federal departments and agencies, provincial, regional and municipal governments, and community groups and organizations in the private sector, including native associations. On some issues there was broad agreement:

- * the importance of historical comparability and time-series data in the census;

- * the need to retain the disability question and to repeat the post-censal survey in 1991; and
- * the need for data on the native population according to legal status under the Indian Act.

For ethno-cultural issues, however, there was no consensus. While most organizations preferred the question on ethnic origin, there was still considerable support for the question on identity. Most agreed that data on visible minorities are needed, but felt that a race question could be sensitive and controversial, even for visible minority groups. Almost no organizations supported the inclusion of the "Canadian" mark box. The reasons given were:

- * the tests had shown that its presence would affect the counts for other groups;
- * it would alter the historical time series and reduce comparability with previous census data; and
- * recent immigrants might confuse it with citizenship or landed immigrant status.

There was also considerable discussion about the selection and ordering of response categories in the ethno-cultural questions. Groups that were not listed questioned the basis for the choice; others suggested that the mark boxes should be in alphabetical order. (To reduce the burden on respondents, the choice and ordering of mark boxes are based on the results of the previous census).

To resolve these and other issues, a second version of the National Census Test (NCT-2) was conducted in September 1989. A smaller and more compact version of the first NCT, with less turn-around and processing time, it sampled approximately 10,000 households in all 10 provinces (excluding Indian reserves). Due to time constraints there was no follow-up for non-response. The overall response rate was around 69%.

Because of its limited focus, the NCT-2 contained only 19 questions on demographic, language and ethno-cultural topics. In essence, it was a revision of the first part of the original NCT. It tested six new or revised questions:

- * preferred official language (for bilingual respondents);
- * open-ended (without response categories) questions on ethnic or cultural origins, ethnic or cultural identity, and religion;
- * registered Indian as defined by Treaty or by the Indian Act;
- * the NCT-1 question on race or colour with the addition of an aboriginal category.

Examples were provided in the open-ended questions for the guidance of respondents. The use of open-ended questions was permitted by the introduction of new and powerful technologies, in particular, automated coding. Previously, all written responses were coded manually, by clerks.

Another feature of NCT-2 was the use of a split sample. Half the respondents received questionnaires with "Canadian" listed as one of the examples in the ethno-cultural questions; the others did not.

The results of NCT-2 indicated that both the revised race question and the new question on registered Indians were understood by respondents and gathered good quality data. This was not, however, the case with the question on preferred official language, and the open-ended ethnic or cultural origin and identity questions.

Analysis of the data and an examination of the questionnaires showed that these new and revised questions were confusing to respondents, and that they represented a significant increase in respondent burden. Furthermore, it was evident that the presence of the "Canadian" example affected responses to the ethno-cultural questions. Respondents were more inclined to report "Canadian" origins or identity when it was listed as an example.

The results of the open-ended religion question were not conclusive. While there were differences in the data it collected compared to NCT-1 and the 1981 Census, it was not clear whether they were due to sampling variability or question format. The new format would, however, entail increased processing costs.

After the two NCTs a new question was developed on landed immigrant status to identify landed immigrants and non-permanent residents such as refugee claimants, foreign students and workers. It was tested in French and English focus groups where it was well received and understood.

9.0 POTENTIAL 1991 CENSUS CONTENT AND THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION

As a result of the two National Census Tests a list was developed of possible questions and content for the 1991 Census. This list included all the questions that appeared in the Canada Gazette, the structural type of dwelling variable coded by trained enumerators, and questions later deleted.

To reduce the content under consideration, Statistics Canada management developed a process of elimination, including

objective criteria for accepting or rejecting questions and topics. A number of factors and constraints were taken into consideration in this process:

- 1) constitutional and legislative requirements
- 2) response burden
- 3) costs
- 4) questionnaire length and space
- 5) user needs
- 6) historical comparability
- 7) data quality from the tests or previous censuses
- 8) potential sensitivity of the questions.

On the basis of these criteria several questions that worked well in the tests were eliminated. These included:

- * current pay rate (factors 2, 3 and 4)
- * length of occupancy (2, 3, 4)
- * date of first marriage (2, 3, 4, 5)
- * married more than once (2, 3, 4, 5)
- * reason first marriage ended (2, 3, 4, 5)
- * ethnic origin of parents/grandparents (NCT version) (5 and 6)
- * ethnic or cultural identity (2, 3, 4, 5)
- * place of birth of parents (2, 3, 4, 5)
- * race or colour (8).

In addition, based on NCT-2 experience, it was decided not to proceed with open-ended formats for questions on ethnic origin or identity.

No decision was taken on the final location of the mother tongue question. While it was apparent from the test data that placing it after the other language questions yielded more consistent data, Statistics Canada realized that any change could affect historical comparability. It was determined that a final decision would be based on constitutional and legislative requirements, as well as user needs. (In the end, as the Chief Statistician announced in testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Official Languages, it was decided that, in order to identify linguistic minorities, the mother tongue question would be retained on the short census form sent to all Canadians.)

The elimination process also included a number of meetings were held with other federal departments and agencies, all major users of census data. Two meetings dealt with the NCT-1 and NCT-2 ethno-cultural and race questions. A third addressed issues related to the questions on language.

Additional consultations and briefing sessions were scheduled with provincial and territorial statistical agencies. In

these meetings users were briefed on the constraints binding Statistics Canada, and they were asked to identify their priority questions and topics in the light of the results obtained from the tests.

10.0 RECOMMENDED 1991 CENSUS CONTENT

As part of the project management structure Statistics Canada established the Content Review Group (CRG), composed of managers representing subject-matter, operational and methodological areas. In the fall of 1989 the CRG held a series of meetings to develop the final 1991 Census content. They discussed census content in terms of the consultation and test results, topic by topic. Questions within each topic, or module, were reviewed and analyzed in terms of the constraints outlined above. On the basis of the discussion, questions and topics were rejected or recommended for inclusion in the 1991 Census. Recommendations were forwarded to Statistics Canada's senior management for final review in December 1989.

The recommendations included some tested new questions as well as the traditional census questions and topics. For the basic census, the short form questionnaire (2A) sent to all households in Canada, the following questions and topics were recommended:

- * number of temporary residents
- * household roster
- * agricultural operator
- * relationship to Person 1 (revised version)
- * age
- * sex
- * legal marital status
- * common-law status
- * mother tongue
- * household maintainer(s)
- * tenure
- * structural type of dwelling (coded by trained enumerators).

These questions and topics would fulfill the legal and constitutional requirements of the census. They would enhance coverage, and meet the minority language information needs associated with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In addition, they would identify families and provide basic demographic information on the population of the country.

The modules recommended for the long (2B) form received by every fifth household covered all the topics included in the 1986 Census, as well as fertility and religion, both of which

are traditional decennial census questions:

- * language
- * citizenship and immigration
- * ethnic origin, aboriginal and religion
- * disability
- * mobility
- * fertility
- * education
- * labour market and income
- * housing.

10.1 Language

Besides the question on mother tongue included in the basic census, the recommendations proposed questions on home language and knowledge of official and other languages. The information provided by the question on official languages would be comparable with that obtained from previous censuses and would enable analyses of trends in bilingualism, language retention and transfers. In addition, new information on knowledge of languages other than English or French would be provided to support multiculturalism and heritage language programs.

For reasons of historical continuity, it was decided to recommend retention of the 1986 question on mother tongue. In addition, its wording is similar to that used in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the data can be used for Charter purposes.

10.2 Citizenship and Immigration

The questions proposed for this module were place of birth, citizenship, landed immigrant status, and year landed immigrant status was received. This module provides information required for the administration of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, for the development of immigration policies and for monitoring the adaptation of immigrants from different countries.

10.3 Ethnic Origin, Aboriginal and Religion

The questions recommended for this module -- ethnic origin, registered Indian and religion -- are required for the administration of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, and the Employment Equity Act. They are also needed by provincial, regional and municipal governments, as well as by ethnic groups and organizations.

Because users, particularly at the federal level, had indicated that historical comparability and time series data were needed to measure change from census to census, the recommendation for the ethnic origin question proposed repeating the 1986 question, without the addition of a "Canadian" mark box. As in the past "Canadian" would be accepted as a valid write-in response to the question on ethnic origin.

The question on race was not recommended. While data on visible minorities are needed for the implementation of the Employment Equity Act, participants in the consultations after NCT-2 felt that this question was controversial and that its inclusion could potentially jeopardize the success of the census. In addition, the data it gathered in the two NCTs did not differ significantly from those derived from the 1986 question on ethnic origin. In view of these facts, it was decided not to propose race, and to retain the 1986 ethnic origin question, with the response category, "Black". As in 1986, the inclusion of the "Black" mark box, along with the other pre-printed response categories ("Chinese") and write-in responses (e.g., "Korean", "Vietnamese"), would serve to collect data on Canada's visible minority communities.

To reduce the length of the questionnaire, an open-ended religion question was proposed, with examples provided to guide respondents. The recommendations also suggested that, as in 1981 and 1986, information on native peoples be collected through the question on ethnic origin. The new question on registered Indians, successfully tested in NCT-2, would ask respondents to indicate their legal status under the Indian Act, as well as Indian band or First Nation affiliation. This question would meet the needs of both the federal government and native organizations.

10.4 Disability

Statistics Canada management recommended repeating the 1986 screening questions on disability to meet the continuing significant demand for data on the size and characteristics of the disabled population. As in 1986 this module would provide the framework for conducting a follow-up survey on disabled persons.

10.5 Mobility

Both one-year and five-year mobility were recommended, along with a filter question before the five-year question to reduce the burden on respondents. The five-year mobility question,

a long-standing census topic, measures population migration between consecutive censuses, and is required for the calibration of models used to produce inter-censal population estimates. It also provides historical continuity with previous censuses. The one-year question, which was successfully tested in NCT-1, would yield a measure of inter-censal migration, and is needed as input for the preparation of population estimates.

10.6 Fertility

To assure comprehensive recording of births, the recommendation proposed gathering fertility data from all women over 15 years, regardless of marital status. Very few difficulties were encountered with this revised question in the tests.

10.7 Education

The proposed education module includes all the questions asked in 1986, plus school attendance, last asked in 1981. A long-standing census topic, the education module collects information that users at all levels can link with other census data such as labour market status, income and ethnic origin.

10.8 Labour Market and Income

No changes were proposed to the 1986 labour market and income questions. As shown in NCT-1, the question on current employment status is not an adequate substitute for other labour market participation questions. This module provides information on employment, unemployment, income, industry of employment and occupation. The labour market and income questions represent the highest priority needs of most federal and other users of census data, and provide data needed by virtually all government and private sector data users to assess social and economic circumstances and trends for the various segments of the population throughout the different regions of the country.

10.9 Housing

The recommended housing questions include utility expenditures and other shelter costs of tenants and home-owners, age of dwelling, value of owner-occupied dwellings, need for repairs, and number of rooms and bedrooms in the dwelling. All have been successfully used in the tests or in previous census

questions. The choice of housing questions was based on user need and quality in previous censuses and tests. Census housing data are required by researchers and other private sector users, as well as by agencies concerned with housing policies at the federal and provincial level.

11.0 CONCLUSION

Starting in 1985 Statistics Canada began planning the next Census of Canada. The development of the 1991 Census entailed far-reaching consultations and an extensive testing program, as well as methodological studies and applications of new technologies.

The cross-country consultations yielded numerous recommendations for future census and survey content. These recommendations and ideas were tested in the content testing program, which included focus groups, cognitive and qualitative research, two modular tests and two comprehensive National Census Tests.

On the basis of the testing program, new questions were developed and long-standing ones revised. However, constraints such as costs, user needs, questionnaire length and response burden required Statistics Canada management to reduce potential 1991 Census content. A shortened list of recommendations for questions and topics was developed and passed to Statistics Canada senior management. These were, in turn, finalized and forwarded for Cabinet review and approval. The 1991 Census questions, as approved by Cabinet, were published in the Canada Gazette on July 21, 1990. They are included in the enclosed booklet.

APPENDIX A

1991 Census Content Consultation Report Recommendations for Census Content

Households

1. Participants are satisfied in general with the household variables. However, support for a change to the person-responsible-for-household-payments variable is solid. Because a modification in favour of joint sharing would include both equal and unequal sharing of responsibility, it is recommended that this modification be preferred to a strictly equal sharing adjustment. Since the change is a modification to an existing question, and because it is so strongly endorsed by participants, it should be considered for implementation in 1991.
2. Also recommended for inclusion in the 1991 Census is a modification of collective dwelling categories. Incorporation of appropriate changes would help ensure that special needs groups would be accurately targeted for possible post-censal surveys.

Families

1. Because they received strong support from participants in the consultation process, consensual unions and support networks for the elderly should be addressed in the 1991 Census either through modification of existing questions or the addition of new variables.

Basic Demography

1. Retain the age and sex questions.
2. Given the near unanimity of participants on the need to establish a distinction between "legal" marriages and "de facto" marriages, this information should be added to the 1991 Census. Tests should be done to see whether it would be better to have two boxes (one labelled "de facto marriage", and the other, "legal marriage") for marital status, or to ask only for "legal" marital status and deduce de facto unions from the relationship to Person 1.
3. Use age as a filter for post-censal surveys on the health of the elderly and their need for support and services.

Aboriginal

1. The separate question on aboriginal identity should be dropped from the census.
2. Aboriginal identity should be included as part of the ethnic origin question. The results of Modular Test 2 should be evaluated to see whether the question can be enhanced to include legal status, as well as band, tribe or nation.

Housing and Shelter Costs

1. The housing and shelter costs topic should be retained in the 1991 Census.
2. The reliability and data quality of all current housing and shelter cost variables, in particular, value of dwelling and condition of dwelling, should be investigated.
3. The feasibility of deleting unreliable housing variables and replacing them with new questions, or topics, should be discussed with major users.
4. The possibility of collecting some housing variables such as need for repairs and dwelling value through sample surveys should be examined.
5. Structural type of dwelling should be included in the 1991 Census. It should be coded by trained enumerators and the output should be part of the regular census program, not produced only on cost recovery. The nine categories used in 1981 should be reexamined to see if they could be improved and simplified. If not, they should be retained.
6. The tenure variable should be retained in 1991 and adapted to include cooperatives. Information on condominiums should be expanded.
7. The feasibility of adding questions, to either the census or surveys, on the special housing needs of elderly or disabled persons should be investigated.

Ethno-cultural

1. A separate question on race should be added to the 1991 Census.
2. The current ethnic origin concept should be separated into

two parts: ancestry and self-identification.

3. "Canadian" should be included as a mark box under ethnic origin.
4. The inclusion of "Black" in its present form under ethnic origin should be reassessed.
5. The question on religion should be included in the 1991 Census.

Language

1. The 1991 Census should include questions on home language and mother tongue.
2. Ways of clarifying and simplifying the current language questions should be investigated; in particular, the ambiguity should be removed from the current mother tongue variable, possibly by splitting it into two parts.
3. While there was considerable demand for information on language of work and education, Statistics Canada has already included these topics in the second cycle of the General Social Survey, which was conducted in the autumn of 1986. It is therefore recommended that the adequacy of these data be assessed and discussed with the principal users and consultation participants.
4. Sign language should be added to the databases, and attempts should be made, as much as possible, to modify the wording of questions to meet the needs of the hearing impaired.

In view of the fact that space on the census questionnaire is limited, and that there were considerable demands for new questions or topics, the following recommendation is made:

5. The quality of the knowledge of official languages data should be assessed with a view to potentially dropping this question and replacing it with another language question, or with one on another topic.

Health

1. Retain a question on disability in 1991.
2. Gather additional information on the nature of disabilities in a post-censal survey. In addition, examine the possibility of conducting a survey on health care, the frequency of services, care of the elderly and various other subjects

brought up during the consultations.

Education

1. Retain the question on level of schooling and test a simpler wording of the question.
2. Drop the question on degrees, diplomas and certificates.
3. Retain the question on major field of study.
4. Repeat the question on school attendance, asking respondents to indicate full-time or part-time attendance, including continuing education for adults.
5. Examine the possibility of obtaining data on education through surveys or from administrative records.

Mobility and Place of Work

1. Because they received strong support during the consultations, both the mobility and place of work questions should be retained in the 1991 Census.
2. Some of the modifications proposed during the consultations, such as mode of transportation to work, should be considered as topics for special surveys.

Nuptiality and Fertility

1. The fertility variable should be included in the 1991 Census; because the fertility of never-married women now forms a significant proportion of the overall fertility of Canadian women, the question should be modified to remove the marital status and age restrictions.
2. Although of less interest to participants than the fertility issue, sufficient support was received for nuptiality to warrant its inclusion in the 1991 Census.
3. Marital history, other than nuptiality, should not be included in the 1991 Census. While there was considerable interest in this option, it would entail two or more new questions. Accordingly, it is recommended that a special survey, rather than the 1991 Census, be used to expand this database further,

Labour Force

1. The labour force topic should be retained in the 1991 Census.
2. A question on wage rates should be tested in the National Census Test. The results of this test should be communicated to the major users who requested the addition of this variable.
3. The addition of questions on hours of work, union membership, work history and other labour force-related questions to the Labour Force Survey should be examined.

Income

1. The income topic should be retained in the 1991 Census.

In view of the fact that the ageing of the population, and its implications for Canadian society, was one of the overriding issues that emerged during the consultations, a second recommendation is necessary: every effort should be made to minimize respondent burden and simplify questionnaires. As the population ages, more people will be affected by physical limitations that will impact their ability to complete complex forms.

2. Ways of simplifying the income questions, including shortening the questions, or introducing greater conformity to Revenue Canada income tax form, should be examined.

New Topics

1. Test a question on work done at home, unpaid work and volunteer work. These topics could be included in the labour force question, and the results would then be used as a filter for a post-censal survey with more detailed questions on work done at home, unpaid work and volunteer work.
2. The topics of child care and the situation of the elderly should be addressed in a post-censal survey.
3. Do not include questions on crime victimization, military service, leisure activities, or union and professional affiliations in either the census or a post-censal survey.